

TKBTC Clerk

From: SLCC Membership <membership@slcc.co.uk>
Sent: 25 January 2023 14:38
To: TKBTC Clerk
Subject: The Future of Local Councils



Dear Dylan,

SLCC has collaborated with the Local Governance Research Centre (LGRC) at De Montfort University (DMU) to conduct an important survey of parish, town and community council clerks across England and Wales; **the first comprehensive, national survey of the local council sector in more than thirty years**. It reveals how these local councils, the tier of government closest to the people they serve, have changed, taking on so much more and being central to the running of their communities.

It's not clear where local councils fit into levelling up and devolution plans, seemingly an oversight when there are more than 10,000 of them working at hyper local level. Today, these statutory democratic bodies run parks, play areas, sports grounds, community centres, public toilets, manage events and took the lead in local efforts during the pandemic.

The report, compiled by the research team at DMU in collaboration with colleagues from Staffordshire University and the Open University, highlights changes and challenges, making some crucial recommendations about the future of local councils and their increasingly pivotal role, particularly around revisiting antiquated legislation, sector professionalisation, the importance of better collaboration with national government and further improvements on standards. It also makes suggestions about improved democratic representation, better discourse with principal authorities, more focused engagement with young people and makes a call for a strategic review of the sector and its role within local government.

We're pleased to see the evidence of increased professionalisation of the clerk's role over the last thirty years, with over half of clerks surveyed having a university education. There has been a positive increase in the number of clerks receiving sector related training or qualifications, which offers essential knowledge and enhanced confidence for the sector. It's testament to the progress that the sector has made to see that only a third of those surveyed in 1991 had specific training, compared with 89% today.

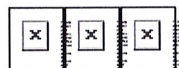
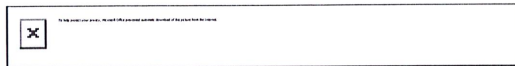
Jonathan Rose, co-Director of the LGRC at DMU says: 'Our survey shows parish and town councils are a microcosm of the broader local governance community. Like

many other tiers of local government, they face similar challenges around collaboration with other levels of government, maintaining standards, and ensuring that they fully represent the communities they serve. Our results also show an increasingly professionalised sector who are used to managing complex assets in a way that supports their communities. Local councils therefore represent an under-appreciated and under-utilised opportunity to bring decisions closer to our communities.'

With such valuable data direct from those working in the profession, the report will provide important input into the changing shape of the sector, offering an insight to all those working towards more relevant local government.

[Click here to read The Future of Local Councils survey.](#)

Sincerely,



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